



Doncaster Council

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 31st July, 2018 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: Thursday, 2nd August, 2018

The end of the call in period is 5.00 p.m. on Monday 13th August, 2018 and therefore, the decisions can be implemented on Tuesday 14th August, 2018

Present:

Chair - Mayor Ros Jones (Mayor of Doncaster with responsibility for Budget and Policy Framework)

Vice-Chair - Councillor Glyn Jones (Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities)

Cabinet Member for:

Councillor Joe Blackham	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services
Councillor Rachael Blake	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools
Councillor Bill Mordue	Portfolio Holder for Business, Skills and Economic Development
Councillor Jane Nightingale	Portfolio Holder for Customer and Corporate Services.

Apologies:-

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Ball and Chris McGuinness.

PUBLIC MEETING – SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS

Public Questions and Statements

No public questions or statements were made at the meeting.

Decision records dated 17th July, 2018, be noted.

DECISION 1.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

6. Doncaster University Technical College (DUTC)

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the following:-

- (1) confirm the Council's active role in the UTC process as a key element of the strategy to support inclusive growth in the Borough;
- (2) support officers' intention to negotiate with the DfE to replace the requirement on the Council to underwrite student numbers in years 1 and 2, with a commitment to reduce surplus capacity in the sector via the Post-16 Review;
- (3) Following a site appraisal and approval by the DfE, and confirmation of funding for the UTC from the Secretary of State, provide the land to enable the construction of a UTC within the site shown in Appendix A via a long-term peppercorn lease. Disposal of the land is at less than best consideration, however, this is off-set by the significant benefits a UTC will bring to Doncaster;
- (4) note the proposed Multi-Academy Trust governance structure, and agree that DMBC will be represented as a Trustee;
- (5) delegate all decisions relating to the site in Appendix A to the Director of Regeneration and Environment to take in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business, Skills and Economic Development;
- (6) delegate all decisions relating to the Council's involvement in the UTC Trust, curriculum development and project teams, to the Director of People to take in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools;
- (7) receive a further report on the negotiations in relation to the precondition, as outlined in paragraph 8(ii) above; and
- (8) in conjunction with recommendation 8(iii), work with South Yorkshire Police on an alternative location for plant and equipment currently based at the Council House Car Park.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Mayor, Ros Jones, initially introduced the report stating that the Doncaster University Technical College (UTC) was one of Team Doncaster's key ambitions with a clear pathway for young people to achieve skilled quality jobs. She stated that it offers a destination for young people and an inspirational curriculum. The Mayor went on to say that with such projects already in operation within the town, such as the Civic and Cultural Quarter, and major projects like the Cinema and

Leisure facilities recently approved, the proposals for the UTC will add to the diverse and exciting offer within the borough.

Councillor Nuala Fennelly provided Cabinet with further details reporting that recently approved by the Government, the Doncaster University Technical College would train up to 750 13 to 19 year olds in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, including advanced Engineering and Digital Design. She stated that the bid was led by Doncaster Chamber, in partnership with the private sector and the Council.

Councillor Fennelly advised that local businesses would benefit from there being an increase in the young people of Doncaster gaining higher skills level qualifications, and that young people would have access to skilled, quality jobs in the local area. She outlined that the UTC was due to open in September 2020.

Councillor Fennelly commented that Doncaster's vision was to be a University City, and to have 27,000 more residents educated to level 4 or above by 2028. She stated that the UTC was another piece of the jigsaw in supporting young people on this journey. In conclusion, she reported that the project was about more than just higher education, it was about social mobility and future life chances for the young people of Doncaster, therefore she recommended the report and the recommendations highlighted within paragraph 8 for Cabinet approval.

Prior to offering the report out for members' comments, Dan Fell, Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce, provided members with further details and background to the report, highlighting the future benefits of the project for young people within the borough.

Councillor Bill Mordue stated that this project was a great achievement for Doncaster, and another example of successful partnership working. He wished to thank Dan Fell for his tenacity on the project, as this was great news for residents and young people of the borough. With regard to the site itself, he stated that he felt that this was an ideal site for the development, which offered a vibrancy to this part of the town, and was another part of the jigsaw in the regeneration of the Waterdale area.

Councillor Joe Blackham wished to applaud the project, and, whilst it had taken some time to get to this position, he hoped that progress on the project moved swiftly in order to see the positive results this development will bring.

Councillor Rachel Blake echoed the comments made, and stated that all were aware of the national crisis that there wasn't enough people studying stem subjects. However, this project was fantastic for Doncaster, and, along with the National College for High Speed Rail, there were now two institutions in place to enable young people to buck the national trend.

In conclusion, the Mayor commented that she was delighted with the scheme which provided young people with the chance to be inspirational, and stated that it will be a great day for the borough when the UTC opens in 2020.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Improving education and economic outcomes for young people is a priority of the Doncaster Growing Together Programme (DGT). The UTC is crucial in achieving Doncaster's Social Mobility ambitions and the UTC, alongside the National College for High Speed Rail, will play a central role in breaking down the barriers to social mobility and providing alternative pathways for young people, through clear supported routes to employment and/or further or higher education.

The recommendations in the report are proposed to ensure that the UTC project remains viable, that the Council can really deliver its social mobility aspirations, and help achieve inclusive growth for Doncaster residents. Further delivery decisions will be required quickly as the project progresses, hence the reason for the delegations proposed within the report.

The option to locate the UTC within the Council House site was included within the bid, as a contribution from the Council towards the cost of developing the UTC.

The Council has no specific source of funding for underwriting student numbers in the first two years of operation, and will negotiate/clarify with the DfE with a view to replacing this with a commitment to reduce surplus capacity in the sector via the Post-16 review, thereby reducing the risk of vacant student places.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Debbie Hogg, Director of Corporate Resources.

DECISION 2.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

7. Breathing Space - Regional Mortgage Assistance Loan Scheme

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet approved the Council's participation in the Breathing Space Scheme by delegating authority for project delivery to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, on Doncaster Council's behalf, with St Leger Homes of Doncaster providing the necessary assistance to ensure the effective operation of the scheme in Doncaster.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Glyn Jones, presented the report to Cabinet stating that approval was sought from Cabinet for the Council's participation in a regional mortgage assistance loan scheme called Breathing Space.

He reported that the scheme was administered from the region by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council as the accountable body. Participating local authorities were required to delegate some of their functions to Wakefield to enable this.

Councillor Jones commented that the loan scheme provided assistance for owner occupiers who were in difficulty with their mortgage through an interest free loan, of between £2,000 and £15,000, which was secured on the property with the purpose of helping applicants avoid repossession to their home.

He commented that it could be used to clear arrears on mortgages and secured loans, and can be used to provide up to 12 months forward payments when needed. He advised that it was suitable for cases where the difficulty in meeting the payment requirements of the mortgage was likely to be short term, giving people a chance to remain in their home and time to resolve their financial difficulties.

Councillor Jones reported that St Leger Homes of Doncaster would provide the necessary assistance to ensure the effective operation of the scheme in Doncaster, through the Housing Options service, and it was important to note that neither the Council, nor St Leger Homes, would be taking any financial risk, and would not be required to make any capital investment to participate in the regional partnership.

He recommended therefore that approval was given for the Council's participation in the scheme, by delegating authority for project delivery to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, on Doncaster Council's behalf.

Councillor Joe Blackham welcomed the report, highlighting that if the scheme only benefited one person, then it would be a success, and it was great that Doncaster Council can play its part and be actively involved in the process. He saw the scheme as a self-help scenario with a zero cost to the authority, which should be applauded.

The Mayor echoed comments made by Councillor Blackham, stating that she was delighted with the scheme which delivers for the people and residents of the borough.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Utilise another scheme – There are currently no other loans schemes of this type that Doncaster Council or St Leger Homes would be able to participate in to offer support to people who are in mortgage arrears, and at risk of losing their home. The only alternative to offer this service would therefore be for the Council to find the financial resources to set up its own loans scheme. This option is not recommended, however, due to the difficulty in finding such funding, but also the time and cost and administration associated with setting up such a scheme.

Do nothing – this is not recommended as it would be denying Doncaster residents with mortgage arrears a service that could allow them to remain in their home.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Peter Dale, Director of Regeneration and Environment.

DECISION 3.

1. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER AND TITLE

8. Funding decisions associated with the Opportunity Area Programme and update on progress

2. DECISION TAKEN

Cabinet:-

- (1) noted the progress made to date;
- (2) agreed to grant fund partners in Learning for an additional £178k, on top of the £300k agreed in February;
- (3) agreed that organisations who are successful through the essential life skills bidding process can be grant funded, to amounts in excess of £50k;
- (4) agreed that decisions around future grants from this fund be delegated to the Director of People, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools;
- (5) agreed that reporting on progress comes through the Doncaster Growing Together Programme, plus termly update reports to Cabinet Member and inclusion in wider scrutiny agenda item on schools performance; and
- (6) agreed that the Opportunity Area Programme Manager engage with communications colleagues to ensure success stories from the programme are shared.

3. REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Nuala Fennelly presented the report to Cabinet, highlighting the recent key stage 2 results, where Doncaster had made real positive progress in narrowing the gap to the national average, and climbing two places in the Yorkshire and Humber list. She stated that these improved results, delivered before the Opportunity Area Programme, have had a chance to make a significant impact, providing an excellent springboard for the Opportunity Area Programme and core Council funding.

She reported that improvements included:-

- Combined Reading, Writing and Maths improved by 7%, compared to national improvement of 3%;
- Reading improved by 7.1%, compared to national improvement of 4%; and
- Maths improved by 3.2% compared to national improvement of 0.5%

Councillor Fennelly commented that the reading results were particularly encouraging. Doncaster had seen a 15% improvement overall since 2016, moving from 55% to 70% in 2018. The 35 schools that received targeted support for reading saw an increase of 20% from 46% to 66% in 2018. This was an improvement worth celebrating and remembering these were all our children, no matter what badge was on the school gates.

She reported that the paper before Cabinet sets out progress since the publication of the Doncaster Opportunity Area Delivery Plan in January, following on from a report to Cabinet in February. She stated that the report requests approval for two specific elements of spend that had been agreed in principle through the Opportunity Area (OA) Partnership Board, but were not covered by the February Cabinet report.

Councillor Fennelly advised that the report asked that decisions on future spending be delegated to the Director of People and Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with herself as Portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Schools, and the full recommendations were in paragraph 7 of the report.

The Mayor, Ros Jones, commented as indicated in the report, the Opportunity Area Delivery Plan set out an ambitious agenda to improve social mobility for the children and young people of Doncaster by reducing the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. She stated that children were the town's future, and, by providing that opportunity to succeed through improved education and vocational routes, they will aspire to successful careers, which in turn stimulates the economy, and the borough becomes a thriving economic entity.

4. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The delivery of a large national, but place based programme, through a Local Authority spending structure, brings challenges associated with a dual approval process, coupled with a desire to get activity implemented as quickly as possible. The potential approaches to tackling this are set out below.

- Develop annual plans and get them signed off in parallel, this is effectively what was done with the first year's funding. Whilst this had been straight forward for year one, this becomes more challenging in years two and three, as decisions are required across the whole programme, and waiting for this annual programme to be developed and approved is likely to lead to delays. On this basis, this option was ruled out.
- Seek approval on a termly basis, another option would be to seek Cabinet approval on a termly basis, this would lead to shorter delays than on an annual basis, but would inevitably bring some degree of delay, which would be suboptimal in such a short programme. On this basis, this option was ruled out.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations.

6. IF EXEMPT, REASON FOR EXEMPTION

Not Exempt.

7. DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Damian Allen, Director of People.

Signed.....Chair/Decision Maker